

# The Kindness of God

2 Samuel 9:1-13

*The Tenth Sermon on Second Samuel*

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We turn from chapter 8 and the darkness of David's depravity to chapter 9 and the light of the Lord shining through David. In the last chapter we saw Jesus Christ portrayed to us despite David; in this chapter we see Jesus in David. And the way we see Jesus here is summarized in a familiar word we've already seen before. In verses 1, 3, and 7 we see the word "kindness." This is the Hebrew word, *hesed*, which has been translated "faithfulness" up to this point. It speaks of a covenant and being faithful, loyal, steadfast to it and the result of pouring out kindness, grace, mercy, and love. What we learn here is that as David shows covenant faithfulness to Mephibosheth he shows the covenant faithfulness of the Lord himself to the outcast and weak. And I want you to see with me this kindness on the horizontal level, between David and Mephibosheth, and on the vertical level, between the Lord and his people:

1. *The Kindness of David*
2. *The Kindness of God*

May the Holy Spirit leads us into the truth of his Word today.

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## **The Kindness of David**

The first thing we see here is *the kindness of David*. And this seems so shocking when you contrast this chapter with what happened in the chapter before and all the sins that we've been reading about in the chapters prior to that. But don't forget what 8:15 said: "And David administered justice and equity to all his people." A part of what we're seeing here is how David's life is no different than any of God's children. We are sinners yet being sanctified. We fall yet the Lord lifts us up.

So the story just jumps in with David asking, "**Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?**" (v. 1) All the way back in 1 Samuel 18 Jonathan made a covenant with David to follow him as king and then in 1 Samuel 20 David made a covenant with Jonathan that when he became king he would not decimate Jonathan's house. David is being faithful to his promise just as the Lord was being faithful to his promises to David. And lo and behold we read that there was someone left. **A servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba** (v. 2) came before David, who asked, "**Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?**" Then **Ziba said to** David, "**There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet**" (v. 3). Notice that without mentioning his name, Ziba merely says he is **crippled in his feet**, emphasizing that he is no threat to David's kingship; emphasizing that he is in need of mercy.

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Ziba tells David where Jonathan's son is (v. 4) and David calls for him to come (v. 5). Then we are re-introduced to him: **Mephibosheth** (v. 6). Mephibosheth was introduced to us back in 4:4 as being five years old when Saul and Jonathan died. Then David reigned seven and a half years in Hebron. Now David's no doubt taken time to win victories and consolidate his power. And we learn here in verse 12 that Mephibosheth is now a father himself so he's probably about twenty years old. When Mephibosheth **came to David** he **fell on his face and paid homage** (v. 6). This is the king and Mephibosheth is the last of the line of Saul, David's enemy. Mephibosheth is doing all he can to avert death. And what does David say? "**Mephibosheth!**" (v. 6) David is over-joyed! Mephibosheth can only say, "**Behold, I am your servant**" (v. 6). Does David destroy him? No! He keeps his word to Jonathan and his word to Ziba and actually shows kindness.

We see David's kindness in verse 7. Notice that it is expressed in three simple ways. First, David provides Jonathan protection: "**Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan**" (v. 7a). He doesn't take Mephibosheth out but he takes him in. Second, David provides Jonathan provision: "**and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father**" (v. 7b). And you see that expressed in verses 9-10 when David tells Ziba that everything that once belong to Saul now belongs to Mephibosheth and that Ziba's fifteen sons and twenty servants would work the ground to provide food and income for Mephibosheth. Third, David provides Jonathan position: "**and you shall eat at my**

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**table always**” (v. 7c; cf. vv. 10, 11, 13).<sup>1</sup> In contrast to Ziba’s sons and servants who would work the ground, Mephibosheth **ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons** (v. 11).

And to all this notice Mephibosheth’s response: **“What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”** (v. 8) Not only is David’s ongoing struggle in sanctification a picture to us, but Mephibosheth is also a type of the Christian here, overwhelmed by the grace of David just as we are overwhelmed by the grace of Christ.

## **The Kindness of God**

That leads to our second point: *the kindness of God*. David speaks in verse 2 of showing his own kindness to whomever is alive from Saul’s house but then in verse 3 he says he wants to show **the kindness of God**. In David’s kindness he reflects God’s kindness, better yet, through David’s kindness the kindness of God was being shown.

Now I want you to see why this is such a big deal for David to show kindness to Mephibosheth. Yes, David is keeping his oath; yes, David is not annihilating the last remnant of Saul’s house; but what does the text emphasize about Mephibosheth? Ziba tells David in verse 3, **“he is crippled in his feet,”** and then the narrator ends this story with the reminder: **Now he was lame in both his feet** (v. 13). Why emphasize this? Why end with his?

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<sup>1</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, 123.

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Do you know what place the lame had in God's kingdom in these ancient days? Go back with me to Leviticus 21. Notice verse 16 and following. The Lord's word to Moses and then to Aaron was this: "None of your offspring throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God" (Lev. 21:17). Now notice the kind of blemishes the Lord was speaking of: "a man blind or *lame*, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, or a man who has *an injured foot*" (Lev. 21:18–19). You could not offer sacrifices—that is what the "bread of God" is—if you were crippled or lame in any way in your feet. It reminds us of ancient Spartan society in which infants would be examined to see who strong they were and how they reacted to things like taking a bath in wine and not water. If they were judged to be too weak they would be killed or sold to slaves. Of course was not being so cruel and harsh; God was showing a picture of his holiness and the requirements to approach him, which none ultimately has except through faith in Christ. In contrast to Leviticus 21, turn with me to Isaiah 35. Here is a prophecy of the coming of Christ's kingdom. And notice what it says about the place of crippled and lame people is in that kingdom. Verse 3: "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees." Verse 6: "then the lame man shall leap like a deer." Turn to Jeremiah 31 and verse 8: "Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame." Again, turn with me to Micah 4:6–7: "In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; and the lame I will make a remnant, and

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those who were cast off, a strong nation.” Finally, look at Zephaniah 3:19: “Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.” David shows a glimpse of that eternal kindness of Christ’s kingdom through his own kindness in his temporal kingdom.

And what did Jesus Christ do in his earthly ministry? He healed and received the lame into his kingdom. Just read Matthew 11:2–6 for a summary. And what has Jesus Christ done by the power of the Holy Spirit in his heavenly ministry to us? He has healed and received those lame in soul, those crippled in spirit, those wounded in heart!

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. (Rom. 5:6–8, 10)

Beautiful, isn’t it?

What does it mean that we have been received into Christ kingdom? Jesus Christ provides us protection from the wrath of God. He says to us, “Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of my Father.”

What does it mean that we have been received into Christ kingdom? Jesus Christ provides us provision in abundance. He says to us, “I will restore to you all that was lost by your father Adam. I will give to you every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”

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What does it mean that we have been received into Christ kingdom? Jesus Christ provides us position beyond our wildest imaginations. He says to us, “You shall eat at my table always, like one of the Father’s sons.” One day, Revelation 19 proclaims, we will sit around a heavenly table for the wedding feast of the Lamb. Until then he has given us *this* table before us. This is the sign and seal of your position in Christ’s everlasting kingdom.

To you who are crippled and lame spiritually and have no position at this table because you have not given your life to Jesus Christ, I urge you to trust in him today.

To you who have been healed spiritually but who feel the constant struggles of sin that cause you to act crippled and lame, Jesus invites you to limp forward to him at this table this morning! Amen.